

'For the Common Good'

Acts 2: 1-11; Ps. 104; 1 Cor. 12: 3b-7, 12-13; Jn. 20: 19-23

In his message to the Church of Corinth, St. Paul says the following:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Jesus breathed on the disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit. And then He sent them out to all nations to use the manifestations of the Holy Spirit '*for the common good*'; for the benefit of everyone not just a select few.

'For the common good' is a phrase that is not heard very much any more. Fifty or sixty years ago, this phrase was often used as a reason for taking certain actions or enacting certain policies.

For instance, it was recognized that clean drinking water was important for the health and well-being of everyone. Therefore, it was decided that the water utilities would be managed by public bodies such as Public Utilities Commissions rather than by profit-making private companies. This was done so that decisions concerning the operation and maintenance of the drinking water systems would be made '*for the common good*' rather than for maximizing profits for a relatively few shareholders.

In recent decades, the concept of 'the common good' seems to have fallen into disfavour, to be replaced by the desire for individual rights and freedoms. While individual freedoms are important and have been protected by Charter, there are times when the rights and freedoms of individuals come into conflict with the common good and result in serious divisions between groups of people.

One instance of this occurred earlier this year when there were vehement protests against government-imposed restrictions designed to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus '*for the common good*'. The protesters felt that, by imposing these restrictions, governments had overstepped their mandates and had infringed on the rights of individuals to choose for themselves the precautions that they were willing to follow.

When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they were able to preach the Good News to people of all nationalities in their own languages so they could readily understand. The Holy Spirit allowed the disciples to draw all people to Jesus without exclusions.

St. Paul said to the Corinthians:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was sent so that all people, forming one body, would be drawn together with Christ as the head. We are all meant to use the variety of individual, unique gifts that we have received from the Holy Spirit for the common good, the good of everyone. As disciples of Christ, let us refrain from using the gifts and talents we have received to sow the seeds of division but rather let us be instruments of unity and solidarity; all '*for the common good*'.